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## Rose Kelley sentencing

'EQUALLY TO BLAME'

**FLINT**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Friday, December 15, 2006

**By Paul Janczewski**

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Marva Crow said she would visit the grave of her 5-year-old niece, Rose M. Kelley, sometime late Thursday afternoon.

"I'll just tell her that's it's over," Crow said softly, picturing the once-vibrant little girl in her mind's eye.

"I'll tell her I'm sorry your mom and dad put you through this," she said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Crow talked of her plans moments after Rose's parents, Michelle L. Bowen and Jeffrey C. Kelley, were sentenced to 17 months to 15 years in prison in Rose's death.

Bowen, 32, and Kelley, 34, were sentenced by Genesee Probate Judge Robert E. Weiss after pleading no contest to involuntary manslaughter.

Weiss called them negligent parents who were partners in Rose's death and said they were "both equally to blame."

Rose died June 3 in the couple's dirty home at 1606 N. Franklin Ave.

The little girl was sick for five days and unable to stand, court records indicate, and all she wanted was to drink pop and sleep.

She died in what officials called deplorable conditions, with her and three other siblings covered in lice in a residence teeming with filth and cockroaches.

Before sentencing, Crow, who is Kelley's sister, read to Weiss from a handwritten three-page letter.

She told Weiss that Bowen and Kelley could have asked for help "but they chose not to."

Crow said the couple had no problem getting medical treatment for themselves "but they couldn't for (Rose)."

She said they chose to "conceal what was really going on in that house" and asked Weiss to hold them accountable for not taking care of their children.

Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton told Weiss the case "cries out for justice " for Rose," and the pair deserved incarceration to send a message that child abuse will not be tolerated.

John Tosto, the attorney representing Kelley, and attorney Kraig Sippell, representing Bowen, said their clients are remorseful.

Both asked Weiss for probation or jail, rather than prison.

"I loved Rose with all my heart," Kelley told Weiss, adding he will "live with this every day of my life."

Bowen shook as she told Weiss she "tried everything I could" to take care of Rose and her other children.

"We were doing our best to get things straight," she said. "I was losing my mind."

She said she did not know that her daughter was that sick.

The couple pleaded to the lesser charge to avoid being charged with second-degree murder.

As part of the plea deal, Bowen and Kelley relinquished parental rights to the three surviving children.

The two youngest, ages 2 and 6, are the couple's children, while the eldest daughter, 10, is the child of Bowen and a Flint man named Jeffrey Mitchell. Prosecutors said earlier that all the children are now thriving in foster care.

Officials with the Department of Human Services had ordered Rose's parents to take parenting classes in 2004 and receive "prevention services" in 2005 after allegations that another child in the home had been medically neglected, according to a court petition.

The Oakland County medical examiner ruled Rose's death a homicide and said she died from liver failure compounded by neglect.

Police also said medical experts believe Rose would have survived if she had been given medical attention.

Weiss said some may view the sentence as too harsh, while others may see it as being too lenient, but he said the sentence is "justice for Rose and justice for those siblings."

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# Couple sentenced for murder by neglect

Michelle Bowen, Jeffrey Kelley in court Thursday



By Taryn Asher

FLINT (WJRT) - (12/14/06)--The parents of a Flint girl murdered by neglect last summer are going to prison. Rose Kelley, 5, died from liver failure.

Thursday's sentencing came one month after her parents, Michelle Bowen and Jeffrey Kelley, accepted responsibility for her death by pleading no contest to involuntary manslaughter.

Judge Robert Weiss exceeded the guidelines and sentenced Bowen and Jeffrey Kelley to 17 months to 15 years in prison, sending a message that both needed to be held accountable for their daughter's death.

For the first time, pictures have been released Rose Kelley. She's smiling and appears to be a healthy girl, but somewhere along the way investigators say Kelley's health and her living conditions deteriorated.

"Jeffrey and Michelle both could have asked for help if they felt overwhelmed by the situation, but they chose not to," said Marva Crow, Jeffrey Kelley's sister.

Crow tearfully told the court there was no excuse for her niece's death. Police found Kelley the day she died, covered in lice in a room filled with garbage and feces.

Prosecutors say Kelley was sick for days and her parents, fearing the state would take her away, never sought medical care. Instead Kelley is gone forever.

"I did not know my daughter was that sick until until it was too late," Bowen said.

Bowen and Kelley couldn't hold back the tears as they tried to explain to the judge their hardship.

"I was losing my mind," Bowen said. "I was highly depressed. I felt like I had no help. I felt lost, trapped."

And they talked about love for their children.

"I love my kids," Jeffrey Kelley said. "I never meant for them to be hurt. I wish it never happened. I have to live with this every day of my life."

Their defense asked for probation, but the prosecution wanted the couple to pay.

"I think justice for Rose is incarceration," said Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton.

Weiss agreed and sentenced Rose Kelley's parents 17 months to 15 years in prison.

"They couldn't walk away with a slap on the hand for what they did," Crow said.

To avoid putting their kids through a trial, Bowen and Kelley already gave up their parental rights for their three remaining children.

*You can see the ABC12 report by clicking on the video icon above. You will need Windows Media Player to view this video. You can get it FREE by clicking here. NOTE: Video clips will only be available for 7-days from the date they were created. ALSO: Video clips may play in a separate window, without audio, on Mac OS X machines. abc12.com is aware of this issue and is working with the video player vendor to correct it as soon as possible. Copyright 2006 ABC Inc., WJRT-TV Inc.*



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Published December 15, 2006

## Legal issues delay burial for Ricky

Evidence must be preserved, prosecutor says

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

### Investigation continues

- Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunning III said the investigation into whether anyone else will be charged in Ricky Holland's death continues. His mother, Lisa Holland, was convicted of first-degree murder; his father, Tim Holland, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

Nearly a year after Ricky Holland's remains were found discarded inside plastic garbage bags in a rural marsh, the slain boy still has not received a proper burial.

But Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunning III said Thursday he is working to arrange a burial that will not only bring closure but also preserve Ricky's skeleton, in case it is needed as evidence in the future.

"We need to inter Ricky's remains in such a way that their evidentiary value is preserved," Dunning said.

A local cemetery has donated an above-ground crypt, Dunning said, and a local funeral home has offered to provide free funeral arrangements.

Dunning said he will meet today with an attorney familiar with probate law, who donated his time, to discuss how to proceed with what is a complex legal situation.

Authorities still have custody of the 7-year-old boy's skeleton, Dunning said.

The remains are considered evidence for two reasons:

- The investigation into whether others will be charged in Ricky's July 2005 death continues.
- His mother, Lisa Holland, sentenced to life in prison for Ricky's murder, is appealing her conviction.

### Parental rights

The parental rights of Lisa Holland and her husband, Tim, are expected to be terminated. Tim Holland pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and won't be eligible for parole until 2036.

The Hollands adopted Ricky as well as three of his biological siblings, who range in age from 2 to 4 years old; those siblings are Ricky's only legal representatives. The state now has custody of them, and they have been placed with Tim Holland's relatives.

Those relatives, through a spokesman, declined to comment Thursday.

Dunnings said the court still has to determine who has the legal authority to claim Ricky's remains and make funeral arrangements.

When that happens, he said he wants to make sure it is understood the remains have to be preserved.

### **Awaiting guidance**

Dr. Dean Sienko, Ingham County chief medical examiner, said he is waiting for guidance from the courts.

"Right now, there's no clear person to whom the body could be released - if indeed it could be released at this point, given other potential actions," Sienko said.

In most homicide cases, Sienko added, the body is released after the autopsy.

Two-year-old Jalyn Daniel, who was abused and killed by his mother's former boyfriend, was buried shortly after paramedics took his body to the hospital in May 2005.

Once the autopsy was completed, there was no reason to keep the body, Sienko said.

But in Ricky's case, his remains were badly decomposed, Sienko said, and the forensic findings were less clear.

### **Complicated procedure**

Attorney Timothy Perrone, who represents Ingham County, described the complicated procedure that will determine who finally gets custody of Ricky's remains.

The first step will be for someone to act on behalf of Ricky's siblings and petition the court to be named Ricky's conservator. That person then would legally be able to ask the court for someone to be appointed Ricky's personal representative, who would stand in place of next of kin for purposes of the burial.

Perrone added: "The whole thing is distasteful, after all the community has gone through already."

Contact Kevin Grasha at 267-1347 or [kgrasha@lsj.com](mailto:kgrasha@lsj.com).

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Published December 15, 2006

## Tim Skubick: Ricky query was proper

Tim Skubick  
Capitol Comment

One viewer accused the moderator of being a "colossal ass" for asking about the Ricky Holland murder during the first debate for governor. Wonder if that viewer saw the recent report on the state's gross mishandling of that little boy's abuse case?

It may never be known if the former foster child's life might have been saved had the state Human Services Department done a better job of investigating his home life. For sure, somebody is to blame for not doing more.

For those who missed that first gubernatorial debate, the question that produced the most vehement public response dealt with the governor's role in all this. To be sure she had no personal role in the matter, as she is not a Child Protective Services worker. But it was her department that administered the case and, as the saying goes, the buck stops at her desk.

Or did it?

Many viewers incorrectly thought the governor was asked if she was responsible for the child's death. What many didn't hear was the word "indirectly" before responsible.

The Holland case was an unmistakable and classic question of accountability ... an accountability question that was fair game in a debate. The governor was asking voters to give her four more years, so it was more than appropriate to review what she had done during the previous four years.

At the time, in early October, the governor could not respond to the specifics of how the state fouled up. Ingham County Prosecutor Stewart Dunnings III slapped a gag order on everyone, telling them not to discuss the state's role because the Holland murder case was ongoing.

Democrat Dunnings was asked if he imposed the gag order to protect the governor from any embarrassing details in the middle of her re-election bid. He steadfastly denied that, saying he imposed it long before the case became a campaign issue, and he did it for legal, not political, reasons.

Turns out there were embarrassing details that are now out and none of them are pretty:

A case worker held numerous sessions with Ricky, but apparently did not visit the home for nearly two years. Someone failed to fully investigate the child's own complaints about being tied to his bed at night. A DHS worker failed to follow up on complaints regarding Ricky's care.

And DHS Director Marianne Udow concedes "errors" were made.

Much has been made about the inadequate number of CPS workers on the job. Former Gov. John Engler has been blamed by some for offering an early out to former employees, who made a mad

dash for the exit door when he sweetened their retirement checks. That depleted the ranks of seasoned veterans who might have done a better job on the Holland case.

The current governor was tagged by some Republicans for not suggesting that more CPS workers be hired, although during her recent campaign, with her own job at risk, she did push for 50 additional workers.

The question about the Granholm administration's role in all this was more than appropriate given the inappropriate response it made in this tragic death. But that is irrelevant now.

What is relevant is what the governor and lawmakers do next.

What do you think? Tim Skubick is a local television correspondent who writes a column for the State Journal on Fridays. Write him c/o Lansing State Journal, 120 E. Lenawee St., Lansing, MI 48919.

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# **Children: In 2007, lawmakers must lead state to prioritize protection**

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Published December 15, 2006

A great deal of responsibility - and pressure - rest on the Legislature and the Granholm administration in the response to the Ricky Holland tragedy.

And not just because the issues of child abuse and child protection are among the most intractable in our society.

Lawmakers are well-advised to spend a great deal of time in 2007 on child protection issues, both in proving to the public effective actions are being taken - and showing the public that such work must take precedence over other state duties.

The public will never know everything about events leading up to Ricky's death. A report from the state's Children's Ombudsman was partially censored before public release. And members of a special legislative committee were only allowed to review the full report Tuesday, not retain a copy.

These measures are designed to protect privacy in what are, inevitably, highly charged and highly personal situations.

These same measures, though, make state officials personally, directly responsible for what happens on the public's behalf - and the quality of any reform measures taken.

Legislation to move oversight of the Office of the Children's Ombudsman from the executive branch to the Legislature has cleared the Capitol. That may help, at least in assuring the public that ombudsman investigations are thoroughly independent of the executive branch.

But when the Department of Human Services is investigating almost half the staff involved in Ricky's case, it's clear problems are not a matter of organization, or reorganization.

Why was so much information on Ricky's plight missed? Why weren't state workers more aggressive in responding to the information they did have?

The 2006 Michigan KidsCount report offers a sobering dose of big numbers to magnify the personal tragedy of Ricky's life. In comparing 1997 to 2005, the report found Michigan worse off on four key standards of child safety:

Michigan had more children in families investigated for abuse or neglect. Michigan had a huge jump in confirmed victims of abuse and neglect. Michigan had more children in "out-of-home" care, and in such care because of abuse and neglect.

Frankly, we're not making progress in child-rearing. And this doesn't look like a problem solved by a new flow chart, or even by the addition of 50 Child Protection Service workers approved earlier this year.

This board has no doubt more case workers and smaller caseloads are going to be part of any success. But those decisions are predicated on a bigger change; a change of attitude in how the public ranks child protection and proper child-rearing as a public goal.

Will we cut other state services to advance policies and services promoting positive parenting and child protection? Will we find ways to enlist the business and nonprofit sectors to help in these efforts?

And will we demand our elected officials lead rather than just react to the next tragedy?



## Central Registry: Let schools look

Thursday, December 14, 2006

Lawmakers who thought they rid Michigan schools of sexual predators last year should think again.

The state Department of Human Services has a confidential list of 317,000 people suspected of neglect, or physical or sexual abuse of a child.

People's names are placed on the list, called the Central Registry, by state social workers who believe these individuals have committed a crime against a child -- even if the person hasn't been convicted or even arrested. In some cases an abused child was too young to testify, the child did not want to testify against a parent or once-trusted adult or there was not enough evidence to file criminal charges. Nevertheless, the state places the names of these alleged abusers on a list to limit their contact with children.

Created in the mid-1970s, Central Registry has some teeth. Being on the list bans a person from adopting a child or working in a day care. Once on the list, people can get off through an appeal process. However, schools have no way of knowing if a job candidate -- or an employee -- is on the list because they are unable to access it.

To use the Central Registry as a tool in its employment process, schools can send prospective employees to the state agency so they can get a form verifying they're not on the list. But that's a voluntary process since no law mandates such a check.

Western Schools Superintendent William Coale said it best: "If they can't be involved in day-care operations, how on earth should they be allowed in the public schools?"

And not only do schools lack direct access to this important check, numerous local school officials aren't even aware such a list exists.

One bureaucracy, DHS, is regulating day-care workers while failing to inform schools through another state agency, the Department of Education, about people who are potentially dangerous to children.

This comes on the heels of the state's list of convicted felons who work in schools being made public last spring. Statewide that list turned up four convicted sex offenders and about 465 other felons, whose offenses ranged from welfare fraud to assault. Through publication of that list, Jackson Public Schools learned a convicted cocaine dealer worked in JPS elementaries for nearly three years under the radar of central administration.

There has to be a way for schools to use the information on the Central Registry. The safety of school children is at stake.

-- Jackson Citizen Patriot

Friday: Bargain Warehouse and late-life letters

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# INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

## Protecting children

**Ronald Sokol**

Friday, December 15, 2006

PUYRICARD, France

Who could be against protecting children? It would seem like a no-brainer. And so it is for all the countries of the world save one.

The Convention on the Rights of Children was completed in late November 1989. Within the next few years, 192 nations signed and ratified the treaty — every country in the world except for two, the United States and Somalia. The latter is unable to ratify the treaty as it has no formal government. No other multinational treaty has been so swiftly and universally adopted. After all, who could be against protecting children?

The Clinton administration had endorsed the children's convention, but shortly after President George W. Bush took office, the new administration asserted its opposition. Three reasons have been put forth to justify its rejection. The first is that the United States has a federal system and that children's rights are governed by the states. But as America has ratified other treaties, such as the Hague Convention on International Child Abduction, which also involve children and which the State Department actively supports, this is hardly a coherent objection.

The second reason is that the convention guarantees what the administration terms "social rights," such as the right to medical services and to a primary education. The current government does not consider such rights to be human rights. Whatever merit that argument might have, the claimed social rights in the children's convention are so minimal that they have been accepted by every country in the world.

This argument is no more than a mask. It would have been almost impossible to gain such wide acceptance from 192 governments if the social rights in the children's convention were more than minimal. In any event, the treaty grants no more protection than what the minimum requirements of due process imposed by the Constitution would require.

The third objection was in fact the real one. The children's convention forbids a country from imposing the death penalty on a minor. As 38 U.S. states have laws imposing the death penalty for certain crimes, the administration refused to submit the treaty to the Senate for ratification.

Yet while the administration may have considered this a valid argument early in Bush's first term of office, times have changed. U.S. law has outrun the government's position so that it can no longer invoke this objection. The change began in 1988, when the Supreme Court ruled that it was a cruel and unusual punishment to execute a person under the age of 16. Until 2005, the convention's prohibition on executing minors could still not be met as children between the ages of 16 and 18 could be legally executed in 38 states and by the federal government. But in 2005 that, too, changed when the Supreme Court ruled that no minor could be executed.

It is puzzling, to say the least, that every government in the world has ratified this treaty except America's. It is no darkly held secret that this administration, while verbally affirming its love of human rights, has shown by its conduct little enthusiasm for active support. Here is an acid test of its true views.

Surely now that the Supreme Court has ruled that it is unconstitutional to execute minors, the administration can and should endorse this innocuous treaty and submit it to the Senate. It would be one small step forward in helping to show that the American government promotes human rights, not just in statements made in White House briefings and State Department reports on other countries' violations, but by its own conduct.

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## 4-year limit on welfare wins approval

### Granolm satisfied with compromise

**BY CHRIS CHRISTOFF**  
FREE PRESS LANSING BUREAU CHIEF

*December 15, 2006*

LANSING -- An agreement to put a 4-year limit on cash welfare benefits was approved Thursday night, as the Legislature wrapped up its lame-duck session with a furious day of bill-passing.

Republicans had sought a strict time limit on how long people could collect welfare for the past two years. They said the limit would encourage people to find work and break the cycle of dependency.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm vetoed a similar measure earlier this year, saying it did not allow for people who could not work because of disabilities or illnesses. Under the proposed agreement, the clock for 4-year limits would not begin until October 2007.

Meanwhile, the state would phase in a more rigorous program aimed at getting people off welfare by directing them to job-training programs.

Liz Boyd, spokeswoman for Granholm, said the changes protect children and incapacitated adults from having their welfare safety net cut away.



Gov. Jennifer Granholm

"We worked to make sure children are protected and that no one is harmed who's playing by the rules and through no fault of their own cannot become self-sufficient," Boyd said. "There is a clear standard and expectation for those who can work."

In some cases, a 1-year extension of welfare benefits could be granted.

Rep. Jerry Kooiman, R-Grand Rapids, said the compromise wasn't as tough as he wanted, but would still help reduce the welfare caseload.

"I think this will move more people to employment and self-sufficiency," he said.

The time limit issue was a logjam to renewing the state's welfare rules, which expire Dec. 31. Without an agreement, lawmakers would have to approve a temporary extension and work out their differences in 2007, when a new Legislature is seated.

Changing welfare rules was among the final acts during a daylong marathon of lawmaking. Much of the assembly line passage of bills was to dispose of pet projects for lawmakers who will leave the Legislature after Dec. 31, most of them forced out by term limits.

The political tilt in the Capitol shifts Jan. 1, when Democrats take control of the House. The Senate remains in Republican hands.

Among the bills still being worked out late Thursday was one to allow local governments to sell bonds to pay for their retirees' health care, a measure aimed primarily at Oakland County and the City of Grand Rapids.

Oakland officials said without the ability to sell the bonds, the county faces a \$9-million budget shortfall next year to cover the cost of retiree health care.

Also headed for final approval was a bill to allow the state to sell more than \$300 million in bonds for capital projects, mostly at universities. Granholm said she would veto the bill if it passed.

Bills headed to Granholm for her signature include one creating a pilot program to make it easier for families to obtain information about long-term care for their loved ones. The legislation would create regional call centers with toll-free numbers to help inform families of choices -- including in-home care, homes for the aged and hospices.

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December 15, 2006

## Gov, GOP reach deal on welfare

Bill places four-year restriction on state cash assistance with fifth year possible if justified.

**Gary Heinlein / The Detroit News**

**LANSING** -- Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm struck a deal Thursday to limit Michigan welfare recipients to four years of cash assistance, with exceptions for certain people.

Lawmakers passed the legislation Thursday night and it appeared Granholm was ready to sign it.

Granholm spokeswoman Liz Boyd confirmed that a deal had been reached.

Legislative action ends a nearly two-year push by the GOP to make changes to the state's welfare system. Granholm vetoed a similar effort a year ago, but the new legislation includes more exceptions to stop recipients from getting kicked off welfare.

"The Department of Human Services is supportive of this bill and is going to recommend that the governor sign it," said Sen. Bill Hardiman, R-Kentwood, the main sponsor of the legislation.

"The main change is that (the Human Services) director can promulgate rules to provide for extenuating circumstances."

The bill puts a four-year lifetime limit on state cash assistance, but provides for a fifth year under extenuating circumstances. The bill also allows for a state assistance recipient who is complying with all the rules and still can't earn enough to support his or her family.

"It encourages people not just to get that first job, but to move forward into self-sufficiency," Hardiman said.

Rep. Chris Kolb, D-Ann Arbor, helped craft the compromise along with Rep. Jerry Kooiman, R-Grand Rapids.

"No family, no children who need assistance will be arbitrarily removed from cash assistance," Kolb said.

The legislation also sets up penalties for recipients who don't comply with work or educational requirements. Recipients could apply for a fifth year of cash assistance if they haven't been sanctioned and the job market is down.

The welfare limits expire in 2011, meaning the Legislature would need to renew them before anyone is actually kicked off welfare.

Other provisions exclude people with learning disabilities, certain physical limitations and chronic mental health problems. There also are "clock stoppers," which stop the clock from running if recipients are working.

Kooiman said one exception that will keep some recipients from losing benefits is high unemployment rates in individual counties.

As of October, Michigan had 88,133 households receiving welfare payments.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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## Granholm, GOP agree to time limit on welfare

Cash assistance for most would end after 4 years

By David Eggert  
Associated Press

Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm struck a deal Thursday to limit Michigan welfare recipients to four years of cash assistance, with exceptions for certain people.

The agreement ends a nearly two-year push by the GOP to make changes to the state's welfare system. Granholm vetoed a similar effort a year ago, but the new legislation includes more exceptions to stop recipients from getting kicked off welfare.

"It will help our welfare recipients move toward self-sufficiency," said Sen. Bill Hardiman, a Kentwood Republican who worked on the bills in the Senate.

"No family, no children who need assistance will be arbitrarily removed from cash assistance," said Rep. Chris Kolb, a Democrat from Ann Arbor who helped craft the compromise along with Rep. Jerry Kooiman, a Grand Rapids Republican.

The measure also sets up penalties for recipients who don't comply with work or educational requirements. The bills would expire in 2011, meaning the Legislature would need to renew before anyone is actually kicked off welfare.

Other provisions in the legislation create exceptions for people with "extenuating circumstances" and exclude people with learning disabilities, certain physical limitations and chronic mental health problems from the lifetime limit. There also are "clock stoppers" that stop the clock from running on limits if recipients are working.

As of October, Michigan had 238,964 individuals in 88,133 households receiving welfare payments.

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## Lawmakers, governor agree to limit welfare benefits

12/15/2006, 1:54 a.m. ET

By **DAVID EGGERT**  
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm struck a deal Thursday to limit Michigan welfare recipients to four years of cash assistance, with exceptions for certain people.

The agreement ends a nearly two-year push by the GOP to make changes to the state's welfare system. Granholm vetoed a similar effort a year ago, but the new legislation includes more exceptions to stop recipients from getting kicked off welfare.

"It will help our welfare recipients move toward self-sufficiency," said Sen. Bill Hardiman, a Kentwood Republican who worked on the bills in the Senate. "Too long so many have been locked in a cycle of dependency."

The Legislature voted overwhelmingly late Thursday to send the package to Granholm, whose spokeswoman, Liz Boyd, confirmed that a deal had been reached.

"No family, no children who need assistance will be arbitrarily removed from cash assistance," said Rep. Chris Kolb, a Democrat from Ann Arbor who helped craft the compromise along with Rep. Jerry Kooiman, a Grand Rapids Republican.

The measure also sets up penalties for recipients who don't comply with work or educational requirements. Recipients could apply for a fifth year of cash assistance if they haven't been sanctioned and the job market is down.

The bills expire in 2011, meaning the Legislature will need to renew it before anyone is actually kicked off welfare. The clock on the limits is set to start in October 2007.

After negotiations with the Granholm administration, lawmakers agreed to allow the state Department of Human Services director to create rules letting people with "extenuating circumstances" stay on welfare beyond four years.

Other provisions in the legislation exclude people with learning disabilities, certain physical limitations and chronic mental health problems from the lifetime limit. There also are "clock stoppers" that stop the clock from running on limits if recipients are working.

Some lawmakers opposed the four-year limits as too harsh, particularly in Michigan's struggling economy.

"We ought to there to help them and not put any time limits on them," said Sen. Martha Scott, D-Highland Park. "Some people will move faster than others."

Kooiman said one exception that will keep some recipients from losing benefits is high unemployment rates in individual counties, protecting people in regions where the end of tourism season or factory shutdowns cause a temporary increase in the jobless rate.

"It doesn't go as far as maybe some of us would like to go, but it certainly puts Michigan back into the top states, I believe, in terms of welfare reform around the country," Kooiman said.

The changes will begin with the rollout of a new program that concentrates more on helping train and educate welfare recipients for the long term and not just finding them a job.

Granholm has said she supports limiting the amount of time welfare recipients can receive cash assistance if they don't have anything keeping them from self-sufficiency, but she said the 2005 legislation went too far.



As of October, Michigan had 88,133 households receiving welfare payments. Those households contain 238,964 individuals, most of them children.

The Senate voted 27-9 to approve the bill in the package that sets a four-year limit and sanctions. Democrats voting "no" were Scott, Raymond Basham of Taylor, Liz Brater of Ann Arbor, Deborah Cherry of Burton, Irma Clark-Coleman of Detroit, Hansen Clarke of Detroit, Burton Leland of Detroit, Buzz Thomas of Detroit and Gretchen Whitmer of East Lansing.

Republican Alan Sanborn of Richmond and Democrat Bob Emerson of Flint did not vote.

Four House members voted against one of the four bills in the package. They were all Republicans — Leon Drolet of Macomb County's Clinton Township, John Garfield of Rochester Hills, Bob Gosselin of Troy and Shelley Taub of Bloomfield Hills.

Seven representatives did not vote. They were Stephen Adamini, D-Marquette; Doug Bennett, D-Muskegon; Kate Ebli, D-Monroe; Kathleen Law, D-Gibraltar; LaMar Lemmons III, D-Detroit; Jim Plakas, D-Garden City; and Glenn Steil Jr., R-Cascade Township.

The House passed other bills in the package unanimously.

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The welfare bills are House Bills 6580 and 6587 and Senate Bills 1500 and 1501.

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Associated Press Writer Tim Martin contributed to this report.

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On the Net:

Michigan Legislature: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

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# Lifetime Welfare Limit Deal Reached

MIRS, Thursday, December 14, 2006

During the final session days (Thursday & Friday) of 2006, the GOP-controlled Legislature and the Gov. Jennifer [GRANHOLM](#) administration reached agreement on a welfare reform package that establishes a four-year lifetime limit for a healthy welfare recipient, but gives the Department of Human Services (DHS) the power to draft exceptions through the administrative rules process.

The deal (embodied in [HB 6580](#), [HB 6587](#), [SB 1500](#) and [SB 1501](#)) involves the coverage limits and sanctions Republicans have been advocating for, but with expanded exceptions and language giving a great deal of flexibility to how the administration can apply the reforms.

After the deal was struck the legislation passed overwhelmingly in both the Senate and the House.

"I think this really will help the state move forward," said Rep. Chris [KOLB](#) (D-Ann Arbor), the top point person for House Democrats on the issue. "It sets limits but also has enough exemptions to allow families to keep moving toward independence. It takes the best from what other states are doing and puts it all together."

Kolb's counterpart, outgoing House Speaker Pro Tem Jerry [KOOIMAN](#) (R-Grand Rapids), agreed.

"We're really moving the state forward with what we're doing tonight," Kooiman said. "We still have the lifetime limits, but we've provided additional exemptions. We're giving the administration additional flexibility in how they implement the rules, but are holding them accountable by requiring more reporting."

"Chris Kolb really stuck his neck out to work this out," Kooiman added. "He really did everything he could to help put this agreement together."

The welfare reform package will require a family self-sufficiency plan to help guide families on the pathway to a better life and impose sanctions for those who do not adhere to their plan.

The package provides exemptions for those who are mentally, emotionally or physically disabled and includes a provision that will encourage recipients to increase their hours and seek higher paying jobs by allowing them to keep more of the money they earn.

It stops the 48-month lifetime limit clock for those who are working and adhering to their family self-sufficiency plan.

"I'm excited about the prospect of moving individuals toward self-sufficiency," said Sen. Bill [HARDIMAN](#) (R-Kentwood), the issue's point person in Senate. "Welfare was never meant to be a permanent condition and we need to break the cycle of dependency. We understand everyone needs a little help now and then so this package provides that while helping get recipients on their way to self-sufficiency."

In the Senate, [HB 6580](#), the main bill that set the lifetime limits, passed on 27-9 vote with Sens. Ray [BASHAM](#) (D-Taylor), Liz [BRATER](#) (D-Ann Arbor), Deb [CHERRY](#) (D-Burton), Irma [CLARK-COLEMAN](#) (D-Detroit), Burton [LELAND](#) (D-Detroit), Martha G. [SCOTT](#) (D-Highland Park), Gretchen [WHITMER](#) (D-East Lansing) and Buzz [THOMAS](#) voting no. The same bill passed the House 103-0.

MICHIGAN REPORT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2006

## **WELFARE REFORMS HEAD TO GOVERNOR**

After multiple attempts by Republicans to implement a life time limit on cash assistance and provide sanctions for those able-bodied adults unable to meet work requirements, the Legislature approved a package of bills that do just that while at the same time enacting the exemptions and clock stoppers Democrats insisted were needed to protect vulnerable families in the state.

Governor Jennifer Granholm is expected to sign the package of [HB 6580](#), [HB 6587](#), [SB 1500](#) and [SB 1501](#).

[Rep. Jerry Kooiman](#) (R-Grand Rapids) said the package “moves Michigan way down the field” in terms of welfare reforms.

“I think it’s going to be good not just for taxpayers but it’s going to be good for our people that do need the system,” he said. “I believe very strongly that we need accountability.”

[Rep. Chris Kolb](#) (D-Ann Arbor) said the legislation gives individuals the tools to be successful in cooperation with the current jobs, education and training program (JET) while at the same time dealing with those people who have not been moving toward self-sufficiency.

Asked how the administration was persuaded to go from waiting to add reforms until after JET was fully implemented and reviewed to adding the initiated reforms at this time, Mr. Kolb said the measures move JET forward and that they were simply good public policy.

“We believe all the safeguards are there so no family and no children that need it will be removed from assistance,” he said.

Members in the Senate also spoke in support of the package, with [Sen. Bill Hardiman](#) (R-Kentwood) saying that it will help not only those people in their first jobs but those who will be getting better jobs.

Under the package, the sunset on current Work First requirements would be extended to March 31, 2007.

The 48-month lifetime limit would also not be retroactive, with the first recipients being placed under the system at the earliest of April 1, 2007 and the rest coming under the limit once JET is rolled out statewide, which is mandated to occur by September 30, 2007. The legislation defines a family sufficiency plan and stipulates that the clock will stop when a person is exempt from work requirements, when they are working and in compliance with state standards and when a recipient’s county unemployment rate is 25 percent above the state average for the month prior.

A person could be exempted from work requirements if they are caring for a child three months or younger or when the individual or a relative the individual is caring for becomes temporarily or permanently disabled, either physically or mentally, and has medical documentation to show this. The Department of Human Services would also be allowed to promulgate rules granting exemptions further for extenuating circumstances.

There would be a 90-day sanction for the first two violations of work requirements and a one-year sanction for the third, however recipients would also be able to have their first sanction terminated if they can show within 10 days of the first violation that they are meeting their work requirements.

Cash assistance recipients would also have an increasing earned income disregard from \$200 plus 20 percent to not more than 67 percent of a person's earned income by September 30, 2010.

The lifetime limit also comes with a 12-month extension clause if a person faces barriers to employment, such as the local labor market, problems with child care or transportation or if the state for some reason cannot meet its obligation to the education and training services its required to provide.

There will also be more legislative oversight in the process with county-by-county reports to lawmakers.

During its marathon final session day, the House also completed action on several bills, sending the following to the governor's desk:

- Petition forms would come in the standard 8 ½ by 11-inch sheet and would come with more descriptions and warnings for people who sign them starting January 31, 2008 under [HB 4328](#), which the House sent onto the governor on a vote of 72-33.
- Legislation aimed at providing tax breaks for farm property held in production for at least 20 years, essentially a farm preservation measure, was approved as the House concurred in Senate amendments, 95-11. With the fraud allegations involved in Proposal 2, which bans affirmative action in state universities an government, Democrats said they would like to see the legislation take on a more comprehensive approach, but added that more could be done next term.
- While [Rep. Leon Drolet](#) (R-Clinton Township) raised some concern that [HB 4455](#) may violate the new provisions of Proposal 2 because it coordinates programs for minority residents; the House sent the bill onto the governor on a vote of 99-5. The bill also requires the Department of Community Health to research minority health disparities, establish policy and develop programs to fix the disparity.
- Bills putting citizenship requirements on a series of state scholarships and loans was approved on divided votes. The chamber concurred with the Senate in moving [HB 5300](#) (79-27), [HB 5301](#) (84-22), [HB 5302](#) (82-23), [HB 5303](#) (80-24), [HB 5304](#) (79-25), [HB 5305](#) (80-24), [HB 5306](#) (82-22), [HB 5307](#) (83-21), [HB 5308](#) (81-23) and [HB 5309](#) (81-23).
- The state would offer tax incentives on a sliding scale for movie productions filmed in Michigan under [HB 5204](#), sent to the governor by a unanimous vote of the House on Senate amendments. "By offering these incentives, filmmakers will be more likely to

shoot commercials, TV series or feature films in Michigan and in turn contribute greatly to our economy. This action says to the industry Michigan is open for business,” said bill sponsor, [Rep. Bill Huizenga](#) (R-Zeeland).

- DCH would establish local or regional single point of entry facilities for long-term care under [HB 5389](#) sent to Ms. Granholm on a unanimous concurrence vote.

- The Department of Natural Resources would report to the Legislature on the progress of factor limits in the sale of timber in state forestlands under [HB 5453](#) with the House adopting a conference committee report on a vote of 98-8.

- The House also sent along [HB 6004](#) on a vote of 58-49. The bill makes revisions to how board members are elected for intermediate school districts as well as how ISDs report certain expenses. Democrats voiced concern that as the Senate-amended the bill charter schools would increase, but [Rep. Brian Palmer](#) (R-Romeo) said the bill allows an existing charter in Detroit to change over to an urban high school academy.

- [HB 6323](#), which provides for electronically written prescriptions, was also voted onto the governor’s desk on a unanimous vote with the House removing wording that barred smoking on hospital grounds.

- Secondhand and junk dealers would also be regulated under [HB 6599](#) and [HB 6630](#), sent to the governor on 76-29 and 96-7 votes. The Senate had amended the bills to provide that local governments could establish licensing fees and increased the fines for obtaining scrap metal from public property. “It has become a public safety problem, reports of vandalism and thefts have been made by several business, churches and even schools of people searching for scrap metal (especially copper and aluminum). I hope that stiffer penalties will prevent thefts of scrap metal,” said the bill sponsor, House Minority Leader Mary Waters (D-Detroit).

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# A day in court creates new families for the holidays

Amy Fox

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GRAND RAPIDS - Usually filled with criminals and victims... instead, the Kent County courthouse was a happy place to be Thursday. More than 80 children officially joined 60 families, in a holiday tradition of the courts, adoption day.

Meet the Horrigan family. Jason and Carey Horrigan have 6 children. The youngest two officially became part of the family at adoption day.

Owen is 17 months old and has been with the Horrigan's since he was 7 weeks old. Carey says he was originally placed "on an emergency basis. So, we didn't know if he would be ours. And fairly quickly, we terminated and he became free for adoption."

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Ten month old Tallula also joined the Horrigan family at 7 weeks of age. Carey Horrigan says Tallula "was just uh, failing to thrive when we brought her home and just needed to have a good, loving environment and proper care. And she's flourished. And she's now 10 months old, and she's little but very active." She's biologically related to the Horrigan's first adopted child, four year old Lucas.

In this family, biology doesn't matter. Just ask the Horrigan's oldest biological child, twelve year old Madylan. She says, "Our family has always known that it's no different. Adopting is no different than giving birth to kids. And um, some people have a hard time understanding that." Madylan explains, ""We just love them to death and I don't know what we'd do without any of them. It's fun to be the big sister. Like um, they can be a pain sometimes. But, without them, we'd be nowhere." The Horrigan's are just one of sixty families becoming whole this adoption day.

Adoption Referee Sandra Recker says it takes a special family to open their hearts to a child who may have had a rough start. She says, "Adoption really needs to be about the children. Not necessarily that people want children. But they need to be the right family for the children as well."

Judges help to make that decision. It's one of their favorite tasks. Probate Judge Patrick Hillary says, "This is by far, the best day of the year for the judges. We do divorce. We see abuse and neglect. We see delinquency. And all day today we do adoption. So, we get to see families come together. We see permanence for these children. And it's just a wonderful day. It's a wonderful day for the families, and it's a wonderful day for the judges. It's the best day of the year, by far."

A day filled with joy and love. As Madylan Horrigan says, "But, without them, I don't know what we'd do. It's just the same thing as your mom having birth to them. We just love them and that's what counts."

Kent County finalizes adoptions throughout the year. But, for ten years now, the county has organized one special "Adoption Day" to bring joy around the holidays. This year, the county set a record with the number of adoptions finalized on "Adoption Day."

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# **Senate Says 'Merry Christmas' To Adoptive Child Medical Bills**

MIRS, Thursday, December 14, 2006

The Department of Human Services (DHS) would be asked to cover an estimated \$20 million in medical costs for adopted special needs children under legislation approved by the Senate, 25-11, tonight.

[HB 6661](#), a late-moving bill sponsored by House Appropriations Committee Chair Scott [HUMMEL](#) (R-DeWitt), is the product of an auditor general report and testimony from the parents of adopted children who find themselves being asked to pay for medical problems they had no knowledge of before the adoption.

Sen. Alan [CROPSEY](#) (R-DeWitt) gave a 22-minute floor speech in support of the proposal, saying the state stands to lose \$45 million in federal funds if it does nothing. He shared with the Senate the teary testimony he took in the Senate Judiciary Committee about parents who are unable to pay the medical bills of their seriously disabled children.

But several senators were skeptical about spending what Sen. Gretchen [WHITMER](#) (D-East Lansing) estimated could be a \$30 million bill that was only introduced three weeks ago.

Speaking to what she saw in the Judiciary Committee, Whitmer said, "These are good people who are doing some extraordinary things for some amazing kids ... (but) this is a spending bill and a decision-making process made in a vacuum. To make changes of this magnitude at the 12th hour is irresponsible."

Despite the budgetary concerns, the Republican caucus and Sens. Irma [CLARK-COLEMAN](#) (D-Detroit), Sen. Hansen [CLARKE](#) (D-Detroit), Sen. Martha G. [SCOTT](#) (D-Highland Park) and Sen. Buzz [THOMAS](#) (D-Detroit) voted in favor of the bill.



## Oakland gives up nursing home that serves low-income patients

### Firm to control it, despite pleas from families and others

**BY KATHLEEN GRAY**  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

*December 15, 2006*

Despite passionate protests from Democrats and pleas from families and employees, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners voted Thursday to relinquish control of the Golden Oaks nursing home facility.

The county has owned and operated the nursing home for mostly low-income patients for 70 years. Golden Oaks has been open since 1977, but during the last several years, the county has been losing about \$1.2 million a year on the facility.

The board voted 14-9, mostly along partisan political lines, to turn the nursing home over to Ciena Healthcare Management of Southfield. The county will pay Ciena \$500,000 during the next three years to manage Golden Oaks. During that time, the company is expected to build a new facility in the Pontiac area and transfer the 88 residents to that facility.

Republican Greg Jamian of Bloomfield Hills joined the eight Democrats at the board meeting in opposing the transfer of authority to Ciena.

"There was a deliberate attempt to ignore this place and to let it go downhill because somebody decided that we don't belong in this business," said Commissioner Mattie McKinney Hatchett, D-Pontiac.

Lori Fry of Waterford, who has been a nursing assistant at the home for 27 years, said employees were upset about the potential change in management.

"We love our jobs and we love the residents," she said. "I don't want to work for Ciena. I want to work for the county."

And Jean Fox, a West Bloomfield resident whose daughter has lived at Golden Oaks for nearly five years, said a move would be disruptive for residents.

"It's so unsettling," she said. "It's such an emotional thing to have their home changed."

But the county administration and Republicans on the board said Golden Oaks has had problems over the years and the county should get out of the nursing home business.

"We can't make money on a 120-bed facility, but more importantly, we can't stop losing money," said Deputy County Executive Gerald Poisson.

"That facility has never been anything to be proud of," said Commissioner Sue Ann Douglas, R-Rochester. "We do not belong in this business, period."

The county is expected to relinquish control of the facility to Ciena by March. Once the 3-year management contract is over, the county will turn its nursing home license over to Ciena.

Contact **KATHLEEN GRAY** at 313-223-4407 or [gray@freepress.com](mailto:gray@freepress.com).

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# The Daily Telegram

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**FRIDAY DECEMBER 15, 2006** Last modified: *Thursday, December 14, 2006 11:41 AM EST*

## Grant addresses homelessness

A \$500,000 grant will be used to create permanent housing for chronically homeless people.

From staff reports

ADRIAN — A project to reduce homelessness in Lenawee County received a \$500,000 boost this week with the awarding of a grant to the Lenawee Housing Development Corp., which will serve as the project's lead agency.

The grant will create five units of permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless and probably will be used to renovate housing in the neighborhood of Adrian Middle School 5/6, according to LHDC board member Chris Miller.

"It's got to be in the city," Miller said, adding that one requirement is that the housing be located near public transportation.

He added that the Adrian location would make it easier to obtain help for those who are clients of the nearby Lenawee Emergency and Affordable Housing Corporation and Family Counseling and Children's Services offices.

"Having a decent place to live is a basic issue of human dignity," said Rep. Dudley Spade, D-Tipton, who helped announce the grant. "It would be easy to believe living in a place like Lenawee County, that no one in our community faces the indignity of homelessness. Unfortunately, though, some Lenawee County residents will be forced to spend their nights this winter on the street."

Funding was awarded by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority.

According to Spade's office, the "Chronically Homeless Initiative" began in October of 2005 when MSHDA, working with the Department of Community Health and the Department of Human Services, identified eight urban locations within the state (Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Flint, Lansing, Muskegon, Pontiac, Saginaw and Detroit) with the largest concentration of people who are considered to be "chronically homeless."

According to state estimates, approximately 6,000 men and women in Michigan are considered chronically homeless. They make up 15 percent to 20 percent of Michigan's homeless but use 75 percent of such resources since they often have mental health problems, frequently worsened by substance abuse.

The state uses the program to work with local partnerships and create permanent solutions for people who have a history of chronic homelessness.

LEAHC will help screen applicants for eligibility, according to Khristine Henson-Jones, executive director of LEAHC.

"Then we need to determine what is going on in these people's lives and what services do they need to be successful," Henson-Jones said.

She emphasized that the project will involve many different groups.

“We have 15 to 20 agencies that have committed to providing services to hopefully make this whole venture successful and make a difference in this community,” Henson-Jones said.

Miller reported that the project will be called Legacy Housing. The name refers to the Legacy of Compassion document, a 10-year plan to end county homelessness presented last month by 27 local agencies making up the Lenawee Continuum of Care.

**-- CLOSE WINDOW--**



# THE BAY CITY TIMES

## Shelter employee files lawsuit claiming assault, unlawful arrest

Friday, December 15, 2006

By **TOM GILCHRIST**

**TIMES WRITER**

**BAD AXE** - A worker at a domestic-violence shelter claims authorities physically assaulted her and unlawfully arrested her when they forced their way into the facility on May 8.

Brenda L. Brooks, a worker at the Huron County SafePlace, seeks a minimum of \$75,000 in damages, plus costs, interest and attorney fees, in her lawsuit filed Oct. 23 in U.S. District Court in Bay City.

According to documents filed in Huron County Circuit Court, Brooks claims an "irate" Huron County Assistant Prosecutor Elizabeth Weisenbach pushed Brooks out of the way to get into the SafePlace on May 8.

Brooks alleges that after Weisenbach shoved her, Bad Axe Police Department Lt. David Rothe told Weisenbach "there was no need to get physical" with Brooks, who tried to prevent the officer and prosecutor from entering the shelter.

A police report written by Rothe claims Brooks put her hands onto Weisenbach's chest area, physically preventing Weisenbach from entering the shelter initially.

Rothe has said Brooks repeatedly refused him entrance to the shelter along West Soper Road on May 8 when he responded to a report of a 35-year-old woman with a back injury.

Rothe said a paramedic told him the back injury actually was due to a drug overdose, so police opened an investigation.

Rothe arrested Brooks, charged by Huron County Prosecutor Mark J. Gaertner with two counts of resisting and obstructing police. A judge later dismissed the charges at the request of Gaertner - Weisenbach's boss.

Brooks names Rothe, Weisenbach, Bad Axe Police Chief John Bodis, Prosecutor Gaertner, the city of Bad Axe and Huron County as defendants in her lawsuit.

Brooks alleges the defendants made unlawful physical contact with her and falsely arrested her.

But a response to Brooks' lawsuit filed by Troy attorney Roger A. Smith - representing Rothe, Bodis and the city of Bad Axe - alleges Brooks "physically and aggressively blocked Weisenbach's efforts to enter" the SafePlace.

Weisenbach serves on the Board of Directors overseeing the SafePlace, which opened early this year featuring about 16 beds for abused women and children.

Rothe simply wanted to investigate a potential crime inside the shelter, and the officer's investigation "was also concerned with the welfare of other residents, including minors, who may have been exposed ... to potentially harmful drugs," according to attorney Smith.

But a brief filed on Brooks' behalf in Huron County Circuit Court maintains officers just wanted to force the shelter into allowing unrestricted access for police, who have said they've had trouble getting into the shelter to serve subpoenas or interview abuse victims.



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Published December 15, 2006

## Society gives food bank \$21,900

Indian cultural group serves meal, presents check to aid campaign

By Kathleen Lavey  
Lansing State Journal

Wearing red aprons, hats and transparent plastic gloves, a dozen members of the India Cultural Society paused for prayer in the kitchen of Open Door Ministries in downtown Lansing.

"Bless this food," said Cris Bobier, ministry director. "Bless the hands that prepared it. Bless the hands that help serve it. Bless those that receive it. Just bless it all."

With that, the volunteers got to work Thursday, serving soup and lasagna to hungry people and presenting a check for \$21,900 to officials from the Greater Lansing Food Bank.

Members of the cultural society, the Bharatiya Hindu Temple in Haslett, and the local Indian community surpassed last year's gift of \$20,000 to the Food Bank, said Sanjiv Dagli, society president.

"Something like this really gives a boost to our campaign," said Sharon Krinock, executive director of the Food Bank. It's in the middle of a campaign to raise \$700,000 and has collected \$302,000 so far.

"I think this encourages others in the community to follow suit," she said.

Besides the cash donation, the cultural society also donated food for the weekly Thursday lunch at Open Door Ministries, housed in the basement of Central United Methodist Church.



(Photo by KEVIN W. FOWLER/For the Lansing State Journal)

Serving the less fortunate: Sunit Patke (right) and Navin Jain (second from right) from the India Cultural Society serve lunch Thursday at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Lansing. About a dozen members of the society participated.

### To donate

- The Greater Lansing Food Bank is trying to raise \$700,000. Donate online at [www.lansingfoodbank.org](http://www.lansingfoodbank.org) or send a check to Greater Lansing Food Bank, P.O. Box 16224, Lansing, MI 48901
- The Food Bank also welcomes volunteers to move, pack and sort food, lead food drives at their churches or schools, or grow food for the hungry in their own gardens next summer.

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"They said 125 people and we said 'the more, the merrier,'" said Bidhan Redey, past president of the cultural society.

"Now, for us, the Lansing community is our home. And the culture of India emphasizes sharing with other people."

Contact Kathleen Lavey at 377-1251 or [klavey@lsj.com](mailto:klavey@lsj.com).

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## Food Bank receives grant to increase space

HOMETOWN HEADLINES

**FLINT**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Friday, December 15, 2006

**By Laura Misjak**

**lmisjak@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6249**

The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan recently received an \$800,000 grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation to help fund an expansion to their warehouse.

The expansion project, "Rescuing the Future Strategy," will add 7,000 feet to the warehouse. The bank also plans to more than double their freezer space, add a new cooler and increase the dock area, all costing about \$1.6 million.

- Laura Misjak

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December 15, 2006

**PAGE ONE***Interim Solution*

# For Welfare Clients, Temporary Jobs Can Be a Roadblock


Short Assignments May Stall  
Goals of Self-Sufficiency,  
A Detroit Study Suggests

Michigan Weighs New Options

By **DEBORAH SOLOMON**

December 15, 2006; Page A1

**DOW JONES REPRINTS**

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DETROIT -- Sheila Thomas joined the welfare rolls in 2003 after her marriage fell apart, leaving her with three young children and no income. In order to collect payments of about \$600 a month, the state required her to sign up for its welfare-to-work program.

Called Work First, the program routes Michigan welfare recipients to outside organizations that help with job searches and training. Its goal, like similar efforts around the nation, is to eventually wean individuals off public assistance.

**POVERTY:****The New Search for Solutions**

*Ninth in a series* [\(See more\)](#)<sup>2</sup>

Through Work First, Ms. Thomas has found jobs. The assignments, though, have all been temporary, each lasting just a few months. Today, she is no closer to achieving her goal -- or the state's -- of self-sufficiency. "I want to work," she says. "But the jobs keep ending."

Proponents of welfare-to-work argue that a client who gets a job, even a temporary one, is less likely to become chronically dependent on public aid. Nationally, between

15% and 40% of all welfare recipients who do work are in temp jobs.

The prevailing view among Detroit officials and others has been that temp jobs, despite their obvious disadvantages, help welfare recipients taste the dignity of work and develop valuable habits, such as punctuality and learning how to interact with others.

But a recent study of job programs in Detroit, which has one of the largest welfare populations in the country, is challenging the long-held belief that a temp job is better than no job.

"Encouraging low-skilled workers to take temporary help agency jobs is no more effective -- and possibly less effective -- than providing no job placements at all," says economist Susan Houseman, of the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, a Kalamazoo, Mich., think tank. She is co-author, with David Autor of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, of a study that tracked 23,000 Detroit welfare recipients.

The results surprised even the researchers. "If anything, we thought that temporary agencies would help welfare workers build skills, connect with potential employers, and so increase their future earnings," says Mr. Autor. "But this is not what we found."

Temp-agency work, they discovered, can create an unyielding cycle of finding and losing jobs. Detroit's Work First clients often had low morale, slim chances for job stability and plenty of setbacks. "While you're working at the temp job you're not connecting with direct-hire employers...you're not making any advances towards finding a permanent job," says Ms. Houseman.

The academic research confirms what some people involved in Detroit's system have suspected all along: that temp work has serious drawbacks. "Having a job this week and no job next week is not conducive to independence," says Melvin Chapman, director of a nonprofit welfare-to-work program called Diversified Educational Services Inc. Founded by his father in 1987, DES provides job training and placement





assistance for 2,000 welfare recipients annually and generally shuns temp gigs for its clients.

One reason: When a welfare recipient loses a job -- especially through no fault of his or her own -- it can create resistance to wanting to work, says Mr. Chapman, a psychologist. In those cases, battle-scarred clients "are more difficult to send on another placement, saying, 'I know how this works, it's a merry-go-round,'" he says.

In addition to their ephemeral nature, temp jobs can have what the researchers call a "displacing" effect. They take up valuable time that welfare recipients could be using to find better, more stable positions. The temporary path may also divert some workers to dead-end jobs that ultimately discourage them from staying in the job market.

In Michigan, nearly half of the state's welfare recipients who exit the welfare system boomerang back within three months, says Marianne Udow, director of Michigan's Department of Human Services.

Detroit welfare officials say that while the preference is to find long-term jobs, temporary placements still are right for some. "Permanent is always the goal," says Deborah Watson, manager of the city's work-force development department. Finding such positions is "more challenging, yes, it is, but we do the best we can."

#### MORE ON THE DETROIT STUDY

- [Expert Q&A: How Valuable Is Temp Work?](#)<sup>3</sup>
- [Read the Study: From MIT's Web site](#)<sup>4</sup>

Although her office participated in the economists' study, Ms. Watson says she hasn't seen the results and could not comment on the findings.

Figuring out how to get people off welfare remains a significant issue long after President Clinton's welfare-reform laws were enacted a decade ago. His administration changed decades of government policy, limiting the time a person can remain on

welfare to about five years and requiring that most people on cash assistance work, seek work or get job training.

The Bush administration recently signed a law updating welfare rules that will push states to move even more welfare recipients toward work and job training. The law requires that states place 50% of all their welfare cases into "work activities" and restricts what qualifies as work. Many college classes, for instance, will no longer count toward the work requirement as they once did. Credit for drug- and other substance-abuse programs is also limited.

Detroit's Work First program randomly assigns its clients to private job-placement organizations. Some send workers to temporary jobs; some don't.

In their study, conducted from late 1999 to mid-2003, Mr. Autor and Ms. Houseman compared work histories of individuals who went the two routes -- as well as those who tried to find work on their own. Of the individuals they studied, about 38% were placed in a permanent job during their Work First participation, 10% were placed with a temporary agency. The remaining 52% left the program without being placed in a job -- often because they didn't fulfill certain requirements such as attending mandatory meetings or submitting paperwork. In those cases, many clients also lost their welfare benefits.

### Surprising Trends

Crunching data from the state's unemployment-insurance wage records, the researchers uncovered some surprising trends. Among workers with similar backgrounds, those placed in temp jobs earned more money at first than those who had been hired directly by an employer for a permanent post. But after a year, the temp workers were earning less money and had less stable employment. They were also more likely to wind up back on welfare than those who had been hired directly by a company into a permanent job.

Even more striking, workers who got jobs through temporary agencies over a two-year period earned about \$2,200 less than those who didn't get placement but presumably found work on their own. The researchers' conclusion: Most welfare clients who were encouraged to take temporary help jobs by the Work First program would have done better by finding a job directly with an employer after some time spent searching on their own.

In 2003, Sheila Thomas, 46 years old, got a part-time grocery-store job paying \$6 an hour through Work First. After the store closed in 2004, she was routed back to Work First, which sent her to a temporary agency.

For about four months she stuffed envelopes and put together in-store displays for a company specializing in paper products. She earned as much as \$7.50 an hour. When that job ended, Ms. Thomas set off on her own to find a new gig through another temporary agency unaffiliated with Work First.

"I would sit there and wait and sometimes they had a job and I'd work a few hours," she says. "Sometimes they had nothing and I'd go home."

Ms. Thomas still longs for lasting employment. "Temp work isn't good because you can't look for something more permanent," she says, echoing the findings of the economists. "A temp job is 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. sometimes and so you don't have time to look. By the time

you try to put your foot on the pavement, they're closed and looking at you like, 'Why weren't you here earlier?'"

To continue to qualify for aid, she is participating in job training and is trying to find work in the food-service business.

For the past two decades, Mr. Chapman's Diversified Educational Services has been trying to locate permanent jobs for people like Ms. Thomas. Although DES doesn't typically send clients to temporary-agency jobs, it makes an exception where an employer uses temporary positions as a probationary period, and puts workers on the permanent payroll after 90 days. The organization has a 60% placement rate and a track record that puts it in the top third of Work First placement providers.

Detroit Hispanic Development Corp., another Work First placement contractor, reluctantly sends some clients to temporary agencies. "We want to use them as our last resort," says Linda Gonzalez, the organization's director of employment and education. "But if it's something where time is running out, when all resources are exhausted, then we work with some of the temp agencies."

Some workers welcome temp assignments for their flexibility. The temporary-help sector has more than doubled over the past 15 years, to 2.6 million in 2006 from 1.1 million people in 1990. On average, most temporary jobs last three to four months, says Steve Berchem, vice president of the American Staffing Association, a trade group. He notes that temp jobs can lead to full-time positions or provide workers with marketable skills and training.

Mr. Berchem largely discounts the economists' findings, saying that other studies show temporary work does help boost low-skilled workers' wages over time. But none of those other studies used the same technique that Mr. Autor and Ms. Houseman used to compare experiences of similar individuals who were randomly placed in different work situations.

The emphasis on permanent, over temporary, work does seem to pay off for welfare clients like Tamra Fleming. A 29-year-old single mother of two, she began receiving cash assistance after having her first child at age 17 and was on and off the program for 12 years. Her first husband ended up in prison; she separated from her second six years ago. Ms. Fleming has been through Work First three times. Her initial stint resulted in a \$6-an-hour, six-week summer job at White Castle. Her second led her to Spherion, a temporary agency, which sent her to do mostly light manufacturing work for auto suppliers.

After her third referral to Work First in August 2005, she ended up at DES, Mr. Chapman's outfit. First it sent her to a three-week customer-service training class. When it ended, a counselor lined up a job interview, advising her on what to wear and how to get a free outfit from another local nonprofit.

In October 2005, Ms. Fleming, who didn't finish high school, landed a \$6.50 an hour job with President Tuxedo, a Detroit clothing store. In July 2006, she was promoted to store manager with a \$35,000-a-year salary and health benefits. She bought a new house and a new car and has since started her own business as a wedding coordinator on the side. She is no longer receiving cash assistance.

### Extra Boost

Ms. Fleming says she wouldn't have found a permanent job without the extra boost from DES. "The welfare program should be pushing people a lot more," she says.

In Michigan, where 79,000 families are currently on welfare -- the state is in the process of replacing the Work First program. Ms. Udow said state officials wanted to change the program because they realized the notion of "finding a job, any job" wasn't working. "Our goal was to create permanent labor-force attachment and to reduce poverty in the state," says Ms. Udow.

The new initiative, called Jobs Education & Training, is being tested in four Michigan counties. It aims to help people find permanent jobs and stay employed. Unlike the Work First model, which immediately sends individuals out to find jobs, clients are first evaluated to size up their overall employability -- from labor skills to other factors such as child-care issues or problems with substance abuse.

As part of the program, Michigan is also working with several companies and nonprofit organizations that help welfare clients find -- and hold -- jobs. One of them is Cascade Engineering, a Grand Rapids-based manufacturer of plastic components used by auto companies and other industries.

Job candidates need to have at least 10th-grade reading and math skills, and must also pass a probationary period. After that, they are hired permanently at entry-level salaries of about \$9 an hour. So far, Cascade officials say, most of the welfare clients sent to them have graduated to full-time positions. The turnover rate among those workers is low, at just about 2.5% annually.

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## Budget officials: State spent too much last year

LANSING, Mich. Three state departments spent nearly 70 (M) million dollars more than they were budgeted last fiscal year.

That's the largest amount of overspending in 14 years.

The extra spending occurred in the human services, corrections and state police departments. Budget officials blame the overruns on increased prisoner health care costs, overtime pay, higher welfare caseloads, higher fuel costs and less revenue from fees than expected.

The overruns are especially troublesome because tax revenues have been coming in lower than expected. It's already bracing for potential midyear cuts in the current fiscal year, which started October First.

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## IN OUR OPINION: All state taxes in need of change

*December 15, 2006*

The state's budget is crumbling so rapidly that Gov. Jennifer Granholm may have to take her second-term oath of office with cutting knife in hand. More importantly, she needs to issue a challenge in her Jan. 1 inaugural to revamp the state's entire tax structure, which now has a built-in annual deficit.

A business-tax rewrite already tops the 2007 agenda. But the best possible restructuring of that tax surely requires rewriting other taxes as well. A complete overhaul of all taxes probably would require voter approval because constitutional changes would be involved. Isn't 2007 the year to try, with no statewide elections on tap?

The current structure is strangling Michigan. State tax revenue has slowed markedly in recent months, creating the possibility of a lingering -- and unconstitutional -- deficit from the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, which will put a double whammy on the current budget as tax revenues remain below expectations.

Basically, growth has slowed to about 0.5%, when it had been predicted to at least keep up with inflation, or 2.5% to 3%. The accumulating shortfall could be anywhere between \$500 million and \$1 billion.

This has financial gurus scrambling for short-term fixes, which may be necessary to get through the current fiscal year. But it is foolish to keep on this way, using Band-Aids when surgery is required.

Whether that means a graduated income tax, a tax on services combined with a drop in the sales tax rate, or some other combination, there must be ways to set Michigan on sounder financial footing while simultaneously streamlining taxes to match the 21st-Century economy.

Jan. 1 is the day to start.

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# CRAWFORD COUNTY AVALANCHE

## County assumes more funding for case worker

*by Dan Sanderson-Staff Writer*

Crawford County officials plan to renew their push to have funding for a Department of Human Services (DHS) foster care worker restored as they assume a greater share of the cost for the position.

County officials have asked the state to restore funding for the foster care worker that was cut earlier this year.

DHS eliminated the funding for the position due to a state law that passed in 2005, which requires counties who have case workers with over 20 children to refer the children to a privately run agency.

Tom Haskel, juvenile officer referee and assistant court administrator for the 46th Circuit Trial Court, said the law was aimed at addressing foster care issues in urban areas.

Although private agencies offer the same level of care as foster care homes supervised by the county, the agencies add administrative fees to the per diems they receive to supervise the children. Paying the administrative fees could cost the county thousands of dollars out of its child care funds, money allocated by counties to place abused and neglected children in supervised homes. The county receives some reimbursement from the state and federal government, depending on the nature of the case.

The county paid \$499,299 from its child care fund for 2006, and will be reimbursed half of those funds.

The elimination of state funding forced Crawford County to pay \$14,097 to keep Ann Church, the foster care supervisor, on board with the county to to avoid paying the costly administrative fees. The county's share covered 30 percent of funding for the position for nine months.

Now, the county is facing paying \$36,000 to cover 50 percent of the wages for a full year.

"It really is a rural county issue," said Paul Compo, the Crawford County administrator. "We're getting hammered by this and we're the least able to afford it."

Haskel said that a strong lobby pushed the state law on behalf of the privately run foster care agencies. The change creates the potential of losing locally supervised foster care homes, which would relocate children outside the county.

County officials have met with Sen. Tony Stamas, R-Midland, and Rep. Matt Gillard, D-Alpena, in hopes of getting the state law regulating the funding of the position changed.

Haskel stressed that the dispute over state funding should not impact the image of the local DHS office.

"Locally, our DHS case workers do a tremendous job and they are an asset to the county," he said.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Giving merrier Christmases Program gathers gifts for needy

Friday, December 15, 2006

**BY LEANNE SMITH**

**News Staff Reporter**

Brightly wrapped boxes and canisters that are decorating many Gregory businesses now will help make Christmas a little merrier for the area's needy families.

The boxes, for collection of unwrapped toys, nonperishable food and small items of warm clothing, and the canisters, for cash donations, are part of Unadilla Township's 10th annual Operation Christmas.

"We have many area families who just can't handle the extras that come with the holidays," said Iosco Township's Jean Waters, an Operation Christmas volunteer. "That's where we hope to help."

Operation Christmas aided about 85 families in rural Unadilla and Putnam townships last year, but has assisted up to 400 people at one time, said Tony Fahmie of Hamburg Township, another volunteer.

"Christmas really is about helping other people," Fahmie said. "Simple Christmas presents and food can help make the season a little more beautiful for many people in need."

Operation Christmas was started by the Unadilla Township police and fire departments and other township offices in 1997, Fahmie said. In subsequent years, area churches took on the project, but in recent years it's been handled entirely by community volunteers, who collect donations, shop for gifts and deliver the presents, he said.

"If you can't donate money or food or toys, but are willing to help with this cause, we want to hear from you," Fahmie said. "Time is just as valuable."

Operation Christmas volunteers work through area churches and other agencies to find local families in need, Waters said. Anyone interested in being served by the group this year, must sign up by Monday. Volunteers will gather at Unadilla Township Hall, 126 Webb St. in Gregory on Thursday to put gifts together, Waters said. They will be delivered Friday. "We really hope that people will come out and help us again this year," Waters said. "Operation Christmas is not a success without the community and its people giving of themselves."

Those interested in donating or helping with Operation Christmas may call Fahmie at 810-231-6134 or Waters at 517-851-9294.

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## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Warm the Children

Friday, December 15, 2006

- What: A program sponsored by The Livingston Community News and The Ann Arbor News that uses readers' donations to buy winter clothing for needy children. The News pays all administrative costs, so a dollar donated is a dollar for a child.
- When: Each holiday season.
- Amount raised so far: \$41,884.
- To donate: Please send a check to Warm The Children, The Livingston Community News, 420 W. Main St., Brighton, MI 48116.
- Information: 734-994-6733.

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